

The Louisville Historian

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Burial Traditions

The last half of the 1800's portrays an interesting picture of how Americans viewed death and subsequent internment. Deaths were announced in a variety of ways such as personal letters to friends, printed funeral invitations, and public notices in newspapers. Early obituaries in newspapers gave scant information about the deceased and said little about funeral arrangements. Most often the obituaries would focus on how the loved one prepared for death and described the final days and hours of their life. The written passages read like sermons and were intended to provide inspiration to the living. For example, an obituary in an 1866 midwestern paper read, "The fatal destroyer, consumption, had been at work for about six months." Another obituary in a Wisconsin newspaper read, "Justina C. Merrill, daughter of Humphrey and Esther Merrill, was born on May 15, 1830. She was the youngest of 6 children, 2 sisters and a brother having preceded her to the spirit world...She bore her distressing sickness with Christian fortitude and patience, and at one time exclaimed, 'All is well with me. God's will be done.' When asked if she wanted to see her sister, she said: 'Oh I shall surely meet her there,' pointing upward. The Bible was read to her and she prayed very earnestly and besought her husband to be sure and meet her in heaven."

By 1876 changes in the announcement of deaths had become more evident. They seemed to be less inspirational and more informative and now began to include details about the arrangements of the funeral services. They celebrated life and family rather than death and the hereafter indicating a growing trend towards religious liberalism in the 1870's.

The funeral ceremony usually found neighbors helping a family "lay out" a corpse by washing and clothing it. This seemed to be a shared community experience and gave people the opportunity to support families by sending them food, offering sympathy, and helping with household chores.

There were funeral parlors throughout the United States but, in general, it was the families who took care of all of the arrangements. After preparation of the body it was usually placed on a wooden board between two chairs. In order to preserve the corpse far at least a day of viewing, the family placed blocks of ice under the board with smaller chunks arranged around the body. Family parlors were sometimes overloaded with flowers, not only for their beauty but also to help with any odor problems. Very few families, even those who used undertakers, embalmed bodies before the 1880's unless they intended to transport the bodies a long distance. Most people viewed embalming as an unnatural and revolting practice. Interestingly, cremation had never been very popular either.

Once all of the mourners had viewed the body in the

house they gathered around for the minister's funeral service. After scripture readings, prayers, and a positive appraisal of the life of the deceased, the body was taken to the cemetery for burial. Much of the time family members were the ones who went to the cemetery to dig the grave although there always seemed to be a grave digger in most communities. The coffin was very simple, usually made of pine and lined with cloth although more well-to-do people in the city were beginning to have custom made, durable, water proof coffins made for them.

Before 1860 cemeteries were either "rustic gardens," small churchyards, and private plots. The rural cemetery, overgrown with wildflowers and massive shade trees portrayed peace and rest. After 1860, as towns and cities grew so did the need for organization. Simple markers for graves were no longer enough to commemorate loved ones, instead larger monuments and tombstones became the norm along with nicely mown lawns. (Source: The Expansion of Everyday Life by Daniel Sutherland)

The Superior and Louisville Cemeteries

Superior Cemetery is located southeast of present day Superior and west of Highway 36. The land was originally owned by the Minks family who migrated to the Superior area around 1862. In 1873 the Autrey and Hakes families formed a group to purchase the cemetery land from the Minks and chose an area that was elevated and near most of the local homes. The first known burial in the cemetery is that of Lottie P. Eggleston in 1873. In 1876 the cemetery was deeded as the, "Cemetery on Coal Creek", then later became known as Superior Cemetery. Presently, the Superior cemetery contains 55 known dead and includes many of the areas earliest settlers.

At one time the Superior Cemetery was called, "The Old Louisville Cemetery" when the Louisville Cemetery opened and a number of bodies were moved to Louisville. Harold Spicer, a longtime area farmer, recalls how, after forty years of internment in the Superior Cemetery a body was removed and could still be recognized.

Many of the dead at the Superior Cemetery were the victims of disease epidemics that occasionally hit the area. Smallpox, diphtheria, and influenza all took their toll among local residents. It appears that the last burial in the cemetery is that of George Ellis Shockey (1870-1949).

The Louisville Cemetery is located on the corner of Highway 42 and Empire Road on land that was deeded to the city from David Kerr, an early settler, in 1892. Soon the property was sold to the International Order of Odd Fellows Lodge 94 for eighty dollars. The cemetery was divided into four sections: one fourth for the Town of Louisville, one fourth owned by the Redmen Lodge, one fourth for the Knights of Pythias Lodge, and one fourth owned by the Odd Fellows Lodge. George Ellis, a member of the Knights of Pythias, oversaw the Louisville Cemetery and kept records of the fraternal organizations.

A water line was built to serve the cemetery in 1909 but,

according to Ellis, the cemetery was nothing but a weed patch until 1935. At this time George and his wife Laura approached the city and asked for funds to enable them to plant trees around the cemetery. They were given twenty-five dollars and proceeded to ask for help from townspeople who assisted them in planting trees around the perimeter of the cemetery. They settled on the planting arrangement to shield the area from the coal mine on the north and from winds and dust. Additionally, Mrs. Ellis collected money from residents who had relatives buried at the cemetery so that she could buy hoses. Mr. Ellis started planting the grass in 1940 by acquiring sod from residents. Eventually, portable, above ground, water lines were purchased and would enable the cemetery plants and trees to flourish.

One of the greatest history lessons one can experience is that of walking through a local cemetery with someone who has lived in the community for seventy or eighty years. The lives of so many come alive with stories and remembrances of times gone by. The interest lies not in the morbidity of the experience but in the reawakening of those who came before us and lived, loved, laughed, cried, and contributed so much to our community.

The Rex Theatre

Louisville, Colorado

September 20, 1952

Friday - Saturday

-Double Feature-

Leo Gorcey-Huntz Hall in

Blues Busters

-Plus-

Gertrude Berg in

Molly

Sunday - Monday

Show Boat

with

Kathryn Grayson

Ava Gardner

Cartoon

Shorts

Sunday Matinee

Chapter 2

Roar of the Iron Horse

Tues. - Wed.

John Wayne - Anne Lee - John Carroll

in

Flying Tigers

News

Cartoon

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In Memory of

*Hazel Harris, Mary Brown,
Dominic DeSantis, Mary Rose Petrelli,
Thelma Leggett, Iona Thomas,
Josephine Averal, and Anna Reddington*

Back To School

The following teachers were listed as faculty members of Louisville Grade School and Louisville High School in September of 1951.

Louisville Grade School

Miss Lydia Morgan	1st Grade
Mrs. Opal Stratton	2nd Grade
Mrs. Pearl Callahan	3rd Grade
Mrs. Alice Davis	4th Grade
Miss Ruth Blosser	5th Grade
Mrs. Iola Goodrick	6th Grade

Louisville High School

Mr. Moore	Social Studies
Mr. Wilson	Science/Math
Mr. Kintz	Music
Mr. Harmon	Industrial Arts
Mr. Nuttall	Social Studies/Coach
Mr. Gold	Coach
Mr. Knapp	Vocational Agriculture
Mr. Thompson	Principal
Mr. Barbiero	Superintendent
Ms Dawson	English
Ms Brown	English
Ms McDonald	Home Economics
Ms Miller	Latin/English
Ms Rhodes	Librarian
Ms Wagoner	Commercial Arts
Ms Burke	English

THE MUSEUM CORNER

By Carol Gleeson

It's hard to believe that we're in the final weeks of summer. Those of you who have visited our museum this summer will attest to the welcomed addition of air conditioning in the Miner's House. Visitors to the museum are now able to explore Louisville's history in the comfort of two air-conditioned buildings. The museum received a thorough "spring cleaning" to compliment new displays and donations. Summer visitors enjoyed the new addition of a TV/VCR to view videos on Louisville and coal mining. Please stop by the museum to see the new displays and to reacquaint yourself with our local history.

The museum is gaining popularity from visitors seeking information on family histories, coal mines, labor strikes, and local structures. We're happy to share our resources with you and to assist you in obtaining information. Recently, we've helped visitors secure Colorado Pioneer License Plates, locate historic photographs of relatives, and obtain information on coal mines and local structures. The completion of "Old Town" Louisville Historical Building Survey in June 2000 has proved to be a valuable resource for homeowners in "Old Town" Louisville.

Louisville Historical Commission continues to provide informative programs and to participate in Louisville festivals. In February, Bob Enrietto presented two programs at Balfour Retirement Community. In May, the Commission hosted the Annual Society Meeting with guest speaker Joanna Sampson. On June 10th, Commission members participated in the Taste of Louisville by opening the museum for tours and homemade pizzelles. Don Ross, Chairperson of the Commission, presented an informative and entertaining history of Monarch Mine No. 2 at the Frank Varra Park and Miner's Memorial Dedication at Flatiron Crossing. On July 4th, Commission members joined the festivities at Memory Square Park sharing historical information and sale items from the museum. Commission members hosted a Silent Auction during the Louisville Fall Festival and opened the museum for tours on the morning of the Annual Labor Day Parade.

Louisville Historical Commission is proud to announce that their logo is now visible on the Louisville Police and Code Enforcement patches. The new police department insignia was placed into service on June 1, 2000. Chief Goodman and Officer Mike Miller presented a plaque to the Commission at the June Board Meeting to recognize the use of the Historical Commission logo for the police department insignia.

As a closing note, I would like to thank Betty Buffo for volunteering weekly at the museum. Betty's tireless efforts to inventory artifacts and prepare new displays are greatly appreciated.

LOUISVILLE HISTORICAL MUSEUM MUSEUM HOURS

1001 Main Street

Tues., Wed., & Thurs. - 10AM to 3PM

Louisville, CO 80027

First Sat. of every month

303-665-9048 10AM to 3PM

DONATIONS

The Louisville Historical Museum has received the following donations during the months of January through July. We sincerely appreciate these recent donations.

Elaine Porta Elrod	Photograph of Christie's Red & White store in 1936
David Schreiter	Leather bridle
Steve & Judy Taylor	Mining documents belonging to John M. Pasterski
Robert Enrietto	Medicine box from Bungalow Drug Store
Virginia Caranci	Photograph album of Frank Jacoe
Patricia Seader	Letters and post cards to and from Stephen J. Vaschak, Stephen & Mary Vaschak, and Margaret Vaschak (1944)
Dave Ferguson	Razors, whetstone, leather key case, "Vita Milk" carton, and Kodak box camera
Margie Hohnholt	Photographs of Main Street, circa 1978
Scott Adlfinger	Safe originally used in Steinbaugh's Furniture & Hardware store on Front Street
Robert Meyer	Colacci's menus from 1955 & 1960
Jill DelForge	Letter, Official Records of the Proceedings of the Grand Temple Pythian Sisters, Knights of Pythias fraternal pin, WWII Scrapbook, <i>Our Navy</i> magazines, <i>LIFE</i> magazines, <i>Touraide</i> travel guide, Gold Star Flag, military leggings, Navy Mothers Clubs of America uniform, dresses, and suitcase originally belonging to William & Nora Clark, June Clark Lynde, & Memory Lynde DelForge.
Monarch High School	Monarch High School, Mosaic 2000, Volume 2
Louisville Police	Police patches
Jim Hutchison	Photographs of the Monarch Mine No. 2
George Daddario, Jr.	Miner's hard hat and lunch pail
Kevin & Ann Brennan	Butter churn, school desk & chair, and metal spoon
Jean Morgan	Wood burning stove
Betty Buffo	Framed picture of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini